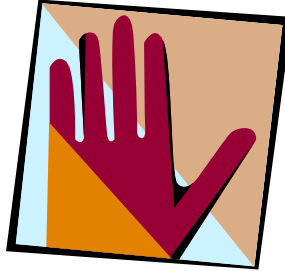


Louisiana Office of Youth Development

PLEDGE FOR SAFETY



As a person dedicated to living a safe and happy life,
it is my responsibility to do the best that I can to
keep myself, my home and my community safe.

Therefore, I pledge to:

1. Show respect for myself and for others.
2. Promote safe solutions to conflict.
3. Be a positive role model for others.
4. Help maintain safety in my home and community.
5. Do the right thing and do it right!

Kathleen Babineaux Blanco, Governor of Louisiana
Simon Gonsoulin, Deputy Secretary
La. Office of Youth Development
P.O. Box 66458, Audubon Station
Baton Rouge, LA 70896
www.oyd.louisiana.gov

July 2006

We all know that many harmful behaviors are the result of people acting out their anger or hurt feelings. This booklet is intended to help you understand what you are feeling and how to deal with your feelings in a positive way.

The main topics include:

What you are feelingpage 2

Be the boss of your anger..... page 3

When you are feeling calmer.....page 4

What is conflict resolution?page 5

Avoid making things worse.....page 6

Peer pressure..... page 7

How peer pressure can affect people. . . .page 8

What is counseling?.....page 9

How to report harmful behaviors..... page 10

What is a family ombudsman?page 11

What you are feeling

Everyone has negative emotions from time to time. It's **OK** to feel sad, lonely or angry. These are normal human emotions. It's **not OK** to let negative emotions take control of you. **Learn how to be the boss of bad feelings.**

Take charge of your feelings!

Tell yourself

- ✓ They are my feelings. I am the boss of them.
- ✓ It's OK to feel sad, upset, afraid and angry.
- ✓ Feeling bad doesn't last forever.
- ✓ I need to think about what I am feeling.
- ✓ I can talk about my feelings instead of keeping them inside me.

Tell others

- Talk about your feelings.
- Tell the other person when you feel upset.
- Remember that some people find it hard to talk about feelings.
- Talking about your feelings may be scary at first, but it gets easier.
- Talking with others helps you to take charge of your emotions.
- Talk about your feelings to someone you trust.





Be the boss of your anger!

Sometimes you just get so angry that you feel like you are going to burst! It seems like your anger will be the boss of you, instead of you being the boss of your anger. Learning ways to control your anger and then using them can make you feel better. Learning to stand up for yourself without hurting people feels good, too.

A

Avoid. Don't let your anger or the anger of others control you.

N

Never use your body or your voice to hurt others.

G

Get away so that you manage your anger safely.

E

Evaluate. Think about your choices, and then make a choice which keeps you and others safe.

R

Responsible. You are responsible for your feelings. No one can make you angry. You allow yourself to become angry.



Bad things about anger

Anger can lead to all sorts of problems if it is allowed to rage out of control.

Someone's body could be hurt.

Someone's feelings could be hurt.

Someone's property could be hurt.

Something could happen that would never be made better.

Someone can feel really sorry afterwards - when it's too late.

And **YOU** could be that someone!!

What can you do to work through that anger and keep yourself and others safe?

- ✓ Take a deep breath and breathe out hard.
- ✓ Count to 10 slowly in your mind before you open your mouth. Count to 10 again if you are still feeling out of control. Stop and think about what to do or say, then make a good choice.
- ✓ Describe your feelings in a firm voice, not a loud shouting voice.
- ✓ Use your words to share your feelings. Never use your body to hurt someone.

When you are feeling calmer

Think! Is this **your** problem or **someone** else's? If it's theirs, tell them so politely and quietly. Or, if something you are doing is a problem for someone else, see if you can work out a solution.

If the problem is yours then you need to deal with it.

Is this a minor drama or a major drama?

Minor drama: If it's really not worth worrying about, then forget it.

Major drama: If it's a really big problem ask yourself some questions.

Can you deal with it yourself?

Do you need some help looking for ways to deal with the problem?

After you have thought about it, decide how you are going to sort things out.

What is conflict resolution?

Sometimes we all get pretty angry. We may feel that something is unfair, something has been taken or broken that we value, someone is being mean or we were not getting a fair chance at something. So what do we do? Well, we could throw a huge tantrum, get really upset and be mean to everybody. Would any of these things solve the problem? Nope! Well, then - what could YOU do?

Conflict Resolution

Try to resolve things so that everyone gets a fair shake.

There are 5 things that you need to do.

- 1 Listen
- 2 Understand
- 3 Avoid making things worse
- 4 Work together
- 5 Find the solution



Avoid making things worse!

No putdowns.

No mean, nasty remarks that will hurt people's feelings. No personal remarks about a person's appearance or background.

No fighting, hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting or any kind of physical harm.

No screaming and shouting. It's hard to keep your voice down when you feel upset, but a quiet firm voice is better than shouting. A loud irritated voice makes everyone upset and unwilling to listen.

Conflict resolution is not easy. It takes everyone involved to work together willingly and to accept and carry out what has been decided.

It is important to feel that you fit in with your peers. But sometimes, following the crowd can make you feel uncomfortable or unsafe. The trick is learning to avoid situations that can lead to trouble.

In the space below, describe a recent situation that could have turned out badly for yourself and others if you had not changed you're actions. How did your wise decision keep you out of trouble? _____

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

How peer pressure can affect people.

Positive		Negative
Stops and thinks +	YOU	Doesn't think of consequences +
Makes good decisions +	CAN	Does what others want, Copies work, Talks in class +
Takes action to avoid trouble +	MAKE	Always ready to join in trouble, Tells lies. +
Uses positive peer pressure	A	Uses negative peer pressure, Teases others, Leaves people out.
= A person who is respected, trusted and gains privileges	CHOICE	= A person who is not respected, not trusted and loses privileges.

What is counseling?

Talking things over with someone, having someone listen to you, support you and help you to find solutions -- that is what counseling is all about. Families and friends often take on counseling roles for each other, but sometimes working with a counselor is best.

Life can be so demanding that sometimes there isn't any time to sort out the little problems, and before you know it, they've grown into giant problems.

- ◆ problems at school
- ◆ problems with friendships
- ◆ problems with parents
- ◆ problems caused by alcohol or drugs
- ◆ problems caused by money
- ◆ problems about body image or self-esteem
- ◆ feeling depressed, angry or confused.

Different types of counseling

If you are assigned to a residential facility, your counselor will spend time getting to know you. You will be doing most of the talking, because you are the expert on your problem. The counselor will be listening and helping you to work out what your problem is and what strategies you can try to fix things.

- You may talk one-to-one with your counselor.
- You may be part of a group working with a counselor
- You may be working with one or more of your family and the counselor.
- You may learn some strategies or ways of coping with the problems.
- You may learn how to relax in different ways.
- You may have to keep notes or a journal to write down your thoughts and actions or reactions.

How to report harmful behavior

Hopefully, you have put all of these tools to use and become the boss of your anger and negative emotion! Others, though, may not have been as successful.

If you witness someone hurting another person by cursing, hitting or causing harm, you **must** report what you saw. Or if **YOU** are hurt by another person, you must report that, too!

You should report your concerns to a trusted staff member and to your parents or guardian. You should also report your concerns to the toll-free hotline set-up specifically for these concerns. The number is available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. When you use the hotline, be sure to speak clearly and identify the person you saw or heard who was causing harm and also give the name of the person who was being hurt. If you know the time and date, be sure to leave this information in your message, too.

The toll-free number for reporting is 1-800-626-1430.

What is a family ombudsman?

You and your family can share concerns and suggestions for improving services with the family ombudsman. This person's job is to help make things as smooth as possible for you and your family while you are living in one of the facilities of the Office of Youth Development. This person can help with questions or concerns that your family may have about your stay with OYD.

You and your family can write to the ombudsman at the following address:

Family Ombudsman
La. Office of Youth Development
P.O. Box 66458
Audubon Station
Baton Rouge, LA 70896

We hope this booklet is helpful to you for achieving success with your dedication to safety!

Resources: Children, Youth and Women's Health Services, www.cyh.com, South Australia, 2004

New Orleans Public Schools, Code of Conduct, 2004 - 2005. "A Ten-Point Pledge Against Violence"

OYD website www.oyd.louisiana.gov